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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST AND GAME PRESERVE



ADDRESS REPLY TO
FOREST SUPERVISOR
AND REFER TO

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

0 - Personnel.

April 12, 1926.

Dear Major Kelley:

With reference to your letter of March 1 and accompanying memorandum of February 27.

You have asked for frank criticisms of the outline of our search for a reliable foothold upon which to build an adequate, far seeing personnel policy for District 7. First, let me state at the outset you have presented the picture in a very admirable way and it is difficult to criticise it. As an outline, there is no criticism. There is much in it that carries to the reader a suggestion of that "enthusiasm, divine inquisitiveness, ability to see, self analysis" which you must possess to pass it on thus effectively. That I think with you is not to be denied. That there are doubts may suggest to you a character which reflects enthusiasm, courage, knowledge of self and of others less brightly than your own. However, they exist and to deny their existence even though they be without foundation would hardly be fair at this stage of the game.

Let us not cloud the issues with details. The problem presents itself to me very briefly, thus. Coming events cast their shadows before them. In many instances our jobs are already outgrowing our men. A knowing glance into the future sees this condition aggravated. What are we going to do about it? We will say:

1. Systematically organize and effect a man ^{hunt} ~~limit~~.
2. Choose our neophytes from those who offer the best promise in accordance with our best judgment of their possession of the necessary qualifications. (You have outlined them admirably.)
3. Adequately equipped with job specifications, properly place them and train them to a point where they are able not only to hold down their particular job satisfactorily, but to outgrow it,

thereby carrying the job to a higher plane and eventually leaving it to tackle a still higher job.

This plan of action may be rather tersely and crudely stated, but in its essentials it agrees with my conception of yours. In the final analysis, it is men we want.

Now let us theoretically at least follow this plan into its practical application.

First: to "organize a man limit"--a mere matter of what we might call mechanics. "To effect it"--more mechanics.

Second: "Choose our neophytes." Right there on that first word "choose" do we run against our first snag--perhaps not a serious one, but worth a moment's consideration. The idea of choice suggests right away--who will do the choosing--who will be the judge of these many rather abstract but nevertheless essential qualifications? You are a thoroughly qualified judge of men. Nine times out of ten your choice would bring us a successful recruit. I am a man young in the experience of judging men in their formative stage. I would ~~bat~~ at a very much lower average. What of our supervisors who have less of the technique or other qualifications than the men whom they might select? How are we to judge the qualifications of an untried man? The answer to this is perhaps a probational period for the neophyte wherein he has a chance to strut his stuff. Even though he struts it are his observers qualified to recognize it when they see it? In some cases, myself included perhaps, I doubt it.

Thus we uncover here at the beginning a weakness in our scheme which must be rectified before we start out. The choosers must be men of the type which we hope to develop in the chosen. Have we these men now? You who sit at the top must answer that and you know us but a few short months. You have not had time to see us in action. Baldly, are we the men on whom you want to place the responsibility of recruiting your future supervisors and D. O. men? We are,--for you have no other choice at present. You must work with us yet a while before we meet this requirement. This indicates at the start a burning necessity for going slowly, proceeding with caution, of changing from the present regime only when we are satisfied that the loss involved in swapping horses in midstream is not unduly heavy. You very correctly say "the world is not to be turned over in a day." I want to emphasize that point. Let us not through a very natural enthusiasm, a chafing at the bit, because of seeming slow progress, lose sight of the

necessity of keeping our feet on the ground. Let us not cast aside that which has carried us with some success to our present efficiency (mediocre perhaps) until we are dead sure. The change must be, as I see it, a transfer here, a new man there, a gradual reworking of the force until the new machine is built, bearing in mind all the time the obligation we have to those who have bent a willing oar in our rough journey thus far. Our choosing of recruits must be carefully done, and done by those who are qualified to recognize potential man power when they see it. In this connection, what do you think of the idea of a personnel officer, or committee if you will, to handle this delicate phase?

To pass on to the third step in our plan. Assume we have our recruit possessing those attributes which are essential. Our next task is to place him where those attributes will be developed to the fullest for the benefit of both man and job. To do this satisfactorily implies a seagoing knowledge of what all of the jobs are and their possibilities in order that he may fill his niche. It must be made so attractive to him that he cannot be other than satisfied, and his satisfaction must take the form of self ~~experience~~ ^{expression} by things accomplished in public service, by slaking a burning thirst for knowledge, by the gratifying of a desire for his particular line of work, else we will lose him. As you point out we may be better off for having had him, but these losses must be kept to a minimum. I may be wrong in this conception, but I thoroughly believe that no personnel policy will succeed with excessive turn-over, and turn-over in the class upon which the high grade personnel of the future is predicated, is fatal. An occasional man with the divine spirit of public service, or that enthusiasm for self ~~experience~~ ^{expression} along certain lines will remain. He may be higher executive material or he may not. That this turn-over will occur in spite of our efforts to prevent it I firmly believe. It is economically and humanly unavoidable. All one needs to do is to raise his eyes from his desk or turn them from his trees and look at the world about him. It is a world of young men in responsible positions, commanding salaries and allowing standards of living not available in service work. He sees perhaps a longing in his wife's eyes for things unattainable, he is confronted with the necessity of laying aside necessary funds to provide for the rainy day, the event of his passing on, the college education for his children, the pleasures and joys that life in this day affords. He weighs these against his work in the Service however attractive it may be and he goes. If he denies these things to his dependents in order to follow his choice of work he must charge it to selfishness; a golden opportunity comes and he embraces it. The Service is better off for his having been in it, true, but his loss is felt not only in the particular niche he fills,

but his future services in those higher positions for which he was recruited are lost. The Government cannot compete with the industries in holding the types of men it needs, under the present scheme of things. The philosophy of some men, a few, will lead them to follow their chosen work regardless of all else. Their work is their all. Material things outside mean nothing to them, or they are satisfied with very little else than rather simple comforts. Others, far more numerous and none the less able, perhaps more so, are not constituted thus and will chafe under the conditions which Service work dictates. Their work is a means to an end, the providing for self and family, those things the possession of which tend toward peace of mind, freedom from financial worry, the joy of providing adequately for those here and those that come after and making the path of life which can be trod only once a little smoother. This class of men the Service cannot hold, and we will get a majority of them in our recruiting. The bulk of ambitious, American human nature is built along these lines.

Again we may not lose altogether to the industries. The very effort which the Service is making in spreading the gospel of forestry outside, the successes and the increasing recognition of forestry as fundamentally sound and economically necessary, is creating a market for high grade trained men. Positions are opening up which will offer not only the opportunity for satisfaction in self expression but the monetary rewards as well, an unbeatable combination and one which will be felt more and more as time goes on and forestry strides ahead. Young men are attracted, will be attracted in increasing numbers and the Service must look sharply for a means to meet this condition.

No, Major Kelley, the Service personnel will not be made over in a day. The present order of things will change slowly in spite of constant and untiring effort. That we should make the effort, I agree with you heartily. That we must be prepared for discouraging set-backs, slow progress and losses is inevitable. We will set ourselves to the task as best we can and push steadily along the lines you have so ably indicated. Progress will be made. We will draw from our new men an occasional winner who will go far in the Service, but if you will pardon an optimist's pessimism these men will be few and far between. I cannot rid my mind of the thought that in dealing with a personnel policy we are dealing with men, and in such dealings, human nature is the controlling factor. A high grade man will find his niche eventually, and it will be the highest he can attain. If it be public service or a love of his work which outweighs the monetary reward his ability justifies, the Service will hold him. If it is high compensation alone or

a combination of that and the opportunity to follow his chosen work, he will go elsewhere as sure as he is human. To my way of thinking, there is no hiding from these facts, and they must be considered in the building of our personnel structure. Hand in hand with bettering the quality of our personnel must go an increase in the attractiveness of our jobs. That they are now wonderfully attractive from the stand point of opportunity for constructive effort is undeniable, but, Major Kelley, this is not all. To command the men we must command the salaries, the living conditions, the opportunities for betterment. We can't do this now in competition with extra-Service opportunities, and we are badly crippled. No effort must be spared to step up the considerations that go with the job. On our success along this line rests the success of our personnel betterment.

You have doubtless considered all of these phases of the problem from every angle, and I no doubt have presented them poorly. The fact remains the Service, District 7 in particular, is poverty stricken in potential high grade personnel. Why? First, we have not gone after the men in a business like way. Second, and most important, we have mighty little to offer the type of man we want. Yes we have the jobs, bully jobs that are envied by many an office stifled business man, but we have not the other attractive things to offer that human nature craves. Until the college educated, Federal forester can live on an equal plane with his business associates, friends and relatives, he is not going to stay with the Federal Service. A far sighted youngster sees these things. If he doesn't, his parents paint the picture for him and he shies off. Many splendid men have left the Service because they cannot afford to indulge their desire for the work further at a heavy sacrifice to themselves and their families. You know many of them and I know a few.

Let us use extreme caution in turning away from the type of man whose standards of living and ambitions are such that the Service can hold him. Let us develop to the fullest our Finks, Coffeys, and Duncans before we substitute high spirited, ambitious chaps who are anxious to cash in on their expensive educations and who will be with us today and gone tomorrow. May their introduction into the lower grades be along experimental lines at first, and their numbers increased at the expense of tried old timers very slowly until we see how they work out in this land of opportunity.

Do not feel that I am trying to discourage the idea of a forward-looking personnel policy involving the introduction of a different type of man power. Such a policy is necessary and its suggested action must be carried out to

a successful conclusion. These remarks are simply by way of pointing out a couple of the more serious washouts on the right of way as I see them.

I'll be glad to give you a crack at my ultra-conservative and perhaps reactionary attitude when you reach Asheville. We are looking forward to your visit.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "M. A. Mattoon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

M. A. Mattoon,
Forest Supervisor.

Recd. 4/17/26
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST



O-Personnel

Gorham, N. H.,
April 15, 1926.

Mr. Evan W. Kelley,
District Forester,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Major Kelley:

Reference is made to your confidential memorandum of
March 1, 1926:

I thoroughly agree with your high ideals and picture of what our job really is. My early training under Supervisor Don P. Johnston convinced me that only by continually endeavoring to secure more and better equipment, a well-trained personnel, and a more intimate and better knowledge of what must be done to assist nature, will our responsibility as foresters be redeemed. I have never been satisfied with the training many of our Rangers and technical assistants were receiving, and have spent long hours in endeavoring to improve all men working with me. On the Pisgah I was continually spurring Verne Rhoades to the need of better trained men, and I worked alongside of the men with the direct intention of arousing enthusiasm and a desire to improve themselves.

During my assignment on this Forest, I have continually emphasized the need of a better trained and more permanent staff, who in turn would not only be employed in solving our innumerable problems, but also would live and work with the Rangers and thereby build up and develop each man to the limits of his abilities. On every opportunity I have outlined our needs and what was necessary to know before we could go ahead effectively and convert this Forest to a condition that would be favorable for the most productive returns from the soil. I have always been dissatisfied with our progress, and I am convinced that this has been considered at times as pessimism; however, it was the "unrest" I felt because we were unable to do so many of those essential things that all real foresters know are absolute necessities. I have always "chafed" at the necessity of the Supervisor's staff having to do so many jobs involving primarily details which should have

District Forester,

been handled by clerical workers. While on the Pisgah and from knowledge secured from other Forests in this District, I was convinced that we had too many "one man" Forests, and I always insisted that the White Mountain would not be handled in that way. With the above statement of my viewpoint, I will give you my ideas of what our personnel situation needs:

All administrative officers of ten to fifteen years experience in the Forest Service have seen the enormous increase in taking on new and expansion of existing activities. Everybody endeavored to handle the jobs on hand and fit in as much of the administrative research work as possible, with the result that but little of the latter was accomplished. Each one of us has annually determined to make a certain study or studies, but often this kind of work was crowded out by unforeseen or unanticipated work. I am absolutely convinced that until we do know and actually apportion our time on each Forest or other unit to the different activities in accordance with the importance of each, the old practices will still continue. This I have advocated for the past two years and have given it some intensive study, but have not been able to carry it out to the final conclusions as it affects this Forest. Until we have a right understanding of the importance of each activity and actually divide up our time in that manner, we shall not make the progress that is so essential. In that way there will be a normal and healthful development of each member of "the child" instead of our present abnormal development of some members and subnormal development of other members.

To secure, educate, and train up the kind of Forest officers needed to accomplish the desired results is without a question the first big undertaking. Every man must stand on his own feet, and the weak will not survive in the end. Within the limitations of Civil Service requirements, we must select the men with education and all those essential traits and requirements that have the best promise of the final development. I am not convinced that we should raise our requirements (Civil Service) to exclude the non-technical man, but rather it must be the man we select and not entirely how much book learning he may have in Forestry. Ranger Graham is an example I have in mind. He was non-technical when entering the Service, but he had a good foundation (in education, necessary traits, and experience) to work on, and the results speak for themselves.

Personally, I am very much concerned with the apparent attitude of so many students now taking Forestry. As I am

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informed after talking with Graham about this condition at Yale and with Fletcher in regards to New Hampshire State, it seems that the better prospects are not planning on entering the Forest Service for one or more of the following reasons:

Some are unwilling to go through the period of loneliness at out-of-the-way ranger stations or in the small villages.

It seems a number are anxious to get married shortly after leaving college, and they are not willing to take a job that they know will keep them away from home.

A number are afraid of hard manual work and are looking for a teaching or state job. Graham was impressed with the viewpoint of the men at Yale in this respect. He found out that the men of highest scholastic standing and leadership had no intention of entering the Forest Service, while the poorer men who could not hope to secure attractive work in private employ were planning on entering the Government service if possible.

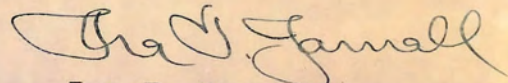
If the above is true of the majority of Forest Schools, something will have to be done to arouse in the better men a desire to enter the Service. This might be accomplished by altering somewhat our line of approach in that while we should emphasize the fact that the Forest Service is the ideal place for training and experience and that it has attractive work, yet the Forest Service is looking for only red-blooded, active, energetic men who are ready and willing to start at the bottom, do manual work as it arises, and at the same time have definite opportunities of advancement to higher and more important positions, provided they demonstrate the necessary ability. I have always felt that the Forest School graduate in most cases had a definite and pronounced advantage over the non-technical man at the start. However, to hold that advantage, he could not rest on his laurels at school but must be a competitor of the other man who in a number of cases was endeavoring to overcome the handicap by self-improvement.

Proper training must enter in this job of building up and developing our personnel to the point needed for the effective redeeming of our responsibility. However, our first step as I see it, is to be exacting in our standards for the careful choosing of new men, for it we can start with the best

District Forester,

possible prospects, there will be an ever-increasing number that will meet our more existing requirements, and do their share in working toward the final accomplishments that are so necessary and essential.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ira T. Yarnall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ira" being more prominent.

Ira T. Yarnall,
Forest Supervisor.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
NORTHEASTERN FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION

ADDRESS REPLY TO
THE DIRECTOR
AND REFER TO

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AMHERST, MASS.

April 9, 1926

Mr. E. W. Kelley,
District Forester,
Forest Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Kelley:

With reference to your recent long hand letter with which you enclosed a copy of your "O Person" memorandum to forest supervisors of March 1, 1926.

I have read this over a couple of times, and am very glad to have had the opportunity to do so. Dana was unable to go over it because he was very busy with a number of matters prior to his departure for Europe. He left on April 7.

Apparently your idea back of the memorandum is to step up the work of the rangers, and I would judge also that of the supervisors, to bring about a realization of the size of their job, and what you will gradually come to expect of them. As the memorandum now stands, it strikes me that it will throw considerable consternation if not fear into the minds of a good many men in your organization. You do not intend it to do so, as you intimate in one or two places, but, if in your place, I would certainly want to stress the fact a little more forcibly that you do not have in mind a very general turn-over of your force and the elimination of a great many men. The ideals which you have set up would, in my judgment, if rigidly applied throughout the Service, eliminate a great part of our personnel, and the elimination would not be confined to the non-technical men by any means. It would reach pretty high in the Service. The Service has been going along for a good many years now with such things as forest fire protection, road and trail construction, and grazing administration foremost in the minds of the administrative men who were responsible for developments. Management of the forests as a piece of productive timber property has not had as conspicuous a place in the program as it is bound to have in the future. As a matter of fact, I believe you realize this, and see that within the next ten or fifteen years the management of the forests as a group proposition is going to come more and more to the

fore, and will displace in importance these other activities which more or less necessarily have been predominant in the past. With forest management becoming predominantly the main activity we must, of course, develop our men along lines whereby they will be able to handle this activity most effectively. In doing so, however, I do not feel that we can give the impression that there must be an abrupt right-about-face in matters of personnel to the extent, at least, of a wholesale turnover in our personnel. We cannot turn men loose who have given up fifteen or twenty of the best years of their lives in the development of the National Forest work to its present stage. You yourself have said that among the men who will doubtless not be able to make the grade when it comes to handling silvicultural and management problems we have many sterling characters, interested, loyal, and of fine integrity. Those men must be taken care of, and I do not believe you would want the impression to get out that they will not be taken care of. Perhaps I have read something into your memorandum which you did not intend should be there. I could not help but get the impression, however, ^{stated} that the ideals which you set up could, and as they are, would eliminate a great many men of this type.

Forestry is an art as well as a science. As a matter of fact, I rather feel that the art is fully as important, and perhaps more so, than the science when it comes to handling a piece of woods. Many of our men who have not the scientific training can be developed into fairly good foresters if they are given the opportunity. I do not know as that opportunity will come right away, - so long for instance, as a man is responsible for one hundred thousand acres of timberland. That is too much for him to handle if he is going to function in much more than a mechanical way. He will seldom have time to make the kinds of studies which you have outlined, to observe carefully, etc. He is too busy rushing around in a flivver to stop and look, and his plan of work ordinarily makes it necessary for him to move and keep moving. I wonder, for instance, if in the plan of work ~~of~~ of your supervisors and rangers you allowed any time for reading, and for simply sitting back sometimes in a chair and thinking about things? Both are decidedly necessary. There has been a good bit of work done already on many of the problems which you enumerated, but I question very much if your supervisors, rangers, or even district office men know very much about them through reading. This is not a particular criticism of the District 7 organization. It is probably true throughout the Service. We have got to the point where there is so much to do that there is little time for reading in official hours. You may say that the read-

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ing should be done outside of official hours. Perhaps some of it should; but there are usually other activities which take up men's time outside of official hours, and they are real activities which should be pursued in order that they may keep a somewhat balanced conception of what is going on in the world and to take part in other things.

Your suggestion of ranger courses is, of course, good. I do not know but what that could be followed a little farther and make the courses open even to technical men. I have often wondered why, with the talent available in the Washington office, we have not in the last ten or fifteen years been conducting some courses of study there. Nothing of the kind has been done, with the result that men in some of the departments are quite ignorant of what is going on in others, and to that extent are not good representatives of the Forest Service. Further, every man there, perhaps, has ideas and knowledge from which the others could benefit. These could all be brought out in some courses of study if they were inaugurated.

The qualifications which you have set up for rangers are on a rather high plane, so high in fact that it practically means forest school graduates in the future. This is all very fine if we can get them. Possibly it can be done. There is sometimes a question, of course, whether the Forest Service offers an attractive enough field for men of that type if they were to sit down and do some real hard thinking before they decided to go into the Service. At the present time I believe a good part of our men come in because they are fond of outdoor work of some character, and there is a certain appeal in this profession of forestry. Men with four to six years of college education, however, might hesitate about taking a ranger's job if he were to give the matter very serious consideration. There are too many other fields open for college men, which, at the end of a ten- or fifteen-year period, offer much better possibilities than the Forest Service. This is not only true of salary, but of other things that go with the jobs, such as liberal group insurance, old age pensions; recreation possibilities, such as gymnasiums, summer resorts, such as are supplied by some of the insurance companies, etc.

Do not think that I am not in agreement with any attempt to secure the best grade of men possible for our jobs, but there is such a thing as setting a standard so high that if rigidly adhered to, we will continually be in a state of flux as to personnel. It will be a case of coming and going all the time.

Your memorandum is returned herewith.

Very sincerely yours,

C. R. Tillotson
Forest Inspector

Enclosure